

will fill his place. Or, a brother may have peculiarities of mind or conduct, and these are thoughtlessly or carelessly made sport of, and he being of a sensitive disposition, piagnantly feels the unfraternal references to himself, and rather than endure them continuously, remains at home, and receives no Masonic wages. Or, still another brother finds that the younger members are crowding the older ones, acting as though they considered them in their way, and were quite indifferent whether they remained absent altogether or not. If any or all of these, or any similar views, prevail to any considerable extent in a lodge, it results in the enforced absenteeism of one or more good members. Just here we would enunciate a vital truth.

It is far more important that the unity of a lodge be sustained by the cordial co-operation of all the members, old and young, than that new material should be continually added to the lodge. Rapid increase in membership is not all desirable, nor an unmixed good. Masonry is not for all men, nor for most men, but for worthy men who are carefully selected from the ranks of the profane. One experienced member of a lodge is worth more to it than a host of initiates. A lodge exists primarily for itself and its members, and secondarily for those who seek to be initiated into its mysteries, and are approved. Never should an old friend be discarded for a new one. Never should one who has knelt at the altar of Masonry himself, and perhaps afterwards has frequently officiated at the reception of others, be estranged from a lodge. If so, such a one is denied the wages he is entitled to receive. Such a one is a constrained absentee. Freemasonry is untrue to itself when it permits this result to occur. The spirit of fraternity forbids it. Ordinary justice forbids it. The company of non-affiliates and indifferents is already too large for us to willingly or directly swell its ranks. There can be no closer tie than unites

one Mason to another, and to sever it unfairly is to commit a great wrong. We cannot suppose that many brethren are forced into absenteeism, but not a single brother should be. We are all members of one Fraternity. Just as in the case of our physical bodies, the hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee; so no lodge can say to any of its conscientious, upright members, We can dispense with your presence. Every lodge is shorn of a part of its power in proportion to the number of habitually absent members it includes. Who could reckon the ability of our lodges, in every Masonic jurisdiction, if every member in health on its rolls were present at every lodge meeting? The abolition of absenteeism in Masonry would mean the introduction of a Masonic millennium.—*Keystone.*

### MASONIC CHARITY—WHAT IS IT?

How few there are who seem to understand the meaning of the words, "Masonic charity."

Some lodges have "charity committees;" but Masonic charity is not and cannot be confined to any committee.

The young student in Masonry is taught that "charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity." Can any committee control that charity? We think not. The "charity committee" we consider, therefore, to be a misnomer.

What is Masonic charity?

It is not the mere giving of alms to the distressed, although it is the duty of a Mason to relieve distress, wherever he may find it; providing that in doing so he does not injure any one having a prior or natural claim upon his bounty.

Masonic charity is as much in the thought and word as in the act.

There are many who give largely of their world's goods, and yet have